

WOMEN'S RIGHTS—A PARABLE

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“And Moses brought their cause before the LORD.”
Numbers 17:5

BY the help of God the Holy Spirit, I want to use this incident which forms a kind of episode in the rehearsal of the history of Israel's forty years' wanderings in the wilderness, for a twofold purpose. First, let me indicate *its general teaching*. And secondly, let me take it as *a ground of appeal to certain special classes*.

I. First, I will try to indicate ITS GENERAL TEACHING.

I would ask your attention and exhibit for your imitation, *the faith which these five young women, the daughters of Zelophehad, possessed with regard to the promised inheritance*. You must remember that the children of Israel were still in the wilderness. They had not seen the promised land, but God had made a covenant with them that they should possess it. He had declared that He would bring them into a land which flowed with milk and honey and there plant them. And that that land should belong to them and to their descendants by a covenant of salt forever.

Now, these women believed in this heritage. They were not like Esau, who thought so little of the inheritance which was his birthright that he sold it to his brother Jacob for a mess of pottage—but they believed it to be really worth having. They regarded it, though they had never beheld it, as being something exceedingly substantial, and so looking upon it, they were afraid lest they should be left out when the land was divided.

And though they had never seen it, yet, being persuaded that it was somewhere and that the children of Israel would have it in due time, their anxiety was lest they, having no brothers, should be forgotten in the distribution and so would lose their rights. They were anxious about an inheritance which they had never seen with their eyes, and therein I hold them up to the imitation of this present assembly.

There *is* an inheritance that is far better than the land of Canaan. Oh, that we all believed in it and longed for it! It is an inheritance, however, which mortal eye hath not seen, and the sounds whereof mortal ear hath not heard. It is a city whose streets are gold, but none of us have ever trodden them. Never has traveler to that country come back to tell us of its glories.

There the music never ceases, no discord ever mingles in it, it is sublime, but no member of the heavenly choir has ever come to write out for us the celestial score, or to—

“Teach us some melodious sonnet
Sung by flaming tongues above.”

It is not a matter of sight—it must be to each one of us a matter of faith. By faith we know that there is another and a better land. By faith we understand that our disembodied souls shall mount to be with Christ and that, after a while, our bodies shall also rise to join our spirits, that body and soul may together be glorified forever in the presence of our gracious Redeemer.

We have never seen this land however—but there are some of us who as firmly believe in it as if we had seen it—and are as certain of it and as fully persuaded as though these ears of ours had listened to its songs of joy and these feet of ours had walked its streets of gold.

There was this feature, too, about the faith of these five women—they knew that the inheritance was only to be won by encountering great difficulties. The spies who came back from the land had said that the men who dwelt in it were giants. They said, “We were in our own sight as grasshoppers, and so we were in their sight.” There was many a man, in the camp of Israel, I have no doubt, who said, “Well, I would sell my share cheaply enough, for though the land is there, we can never win it. They have cities walled up to heaven and they have chariots of iron—we can never win the land.”

But these women believed that, although they could not fight, God could. And though they had never put their fingers to a more terrible instrument than a needle, yet did they believe that the same right arm which got itself the victory when they went with Miriam, dancing to the timbrel's jubilant sound, would get the victory again, and bring God's people in, and drive the Canaanites out, even though they had walled cities and chariots of iron.

So these women had strong faith. I would to God that you had the same, all of you, dear friends, but I know that some of you, who do believe that there is a land which flows with milk and honey, are half afraid that you shall never reach it. You are vexed with many doubts because of your own weakness, which, indeed, should not merely make you doubt, but should make you utterly despair if the gaining of the goodly land depended upon your own fighting for it and winning it.

But inasmuch as “the *gift* of God is eternal life” and God himself will give it to us, and inasmuch as Jesus has gone up on high to prepare a place for us, and has promised that He will come again and receive us unto Himself that where He is there we may be also, I would to God that our doubts and fears were banished, and that we said within ourselves “We are well able to go up and attack the land for the Lord, even the Lord of Hosts, is with us. JEHOVAH-nissi is our banner. The Lord our righteousness is our Helper, and we shall surely enter into the place of the beloved people of God, and shall join the general assembly and church of the firstborn which are written in heaven.”

I commend the faith of these women to you because, believing in the land, and believing that it would be won, they were not to be put about by the ill report of some who said that it was not a good land. There were ten out of the twelve who spied out the land who said, “It is a land that eateth up the inhabitants thereof.” They brought back an evil report. But whoever may have been perverted by these falsehoods, these five women were not.

Others said, “Why, the land is full of pestilence and hornets, and those who live in it now are dying,” forgetting that God was making them die in order to bring in the children of Israel in their stead. And so they said, “Who cares to have a portion there? Give us the leeks, and the garlic, and the onions of Egypt—and let us sit again by the flesh-pots that we had at Rameses—but as for going on to this Canaan, we will never do it.”

But these five women, who knew that, if there were troubles in the household, *they* would be sure to have their share of them, that if the bread ran short, *they* would be the most likely to feel the straitness of it, and that if it were a land of sickness, *they* would have to be the nurses, yet coveted to have their share in it, for they did not believe the ill report.

They said, “No, God has said it is a good land, a land of hills and valleys, a land of brooks and rivers, a land of olive oil and honey, a land out of whose hills we may dig iron and brass—and we will not believe what you spies say—it is a good land, and we will go in and ask for our share of it.” So I commend their faith in this respect.

I know that some of you are occasionally met by sneering skeptics and they say to you, “There is no such place as heaven. We have never seen it—are you such fools as to believe in it? Are you going on a pilgrimage over hedge and ditch, helter-skelter, to a country that you know nothing of? Are you going to trust that old-fashioned Book, and take God's Word, and nothing but His Word, and believe it?”

Oh, I hope there are many of us—would that all of us were in that happy position!—who can say, “It is even so.” Stand back, Mr. Atheist, and stop us not, for we are well-persuaded that ours is no wild-goose chase. Stand back, Sir Ironical Skeptic. Laugh if you will. You will laugh on the other side of your face one of these days, and we shall have the last laugh at that time.

At any rate, if there is no heaven, we shall be as well off as you will be, but if there be a hell, where, O where, will you be and what will your portion be? So we go on our own way confident and sure, doubting nothing—believing as surely as we believe in our own existence, that—

*“Jesus, the Judge, will come
To take His people up
To their eternal home;”—*

and believing that one hour with Him will be worth all the trials of the road—worth enduring ten thousand deaths, if we could endure them, in order to win it, and that, moreover, by God's grace we shall win it.

*“We shall behold His face,
We shall His name adore,
And sing the wonders of His grace
Henceforth for evermore.”*

So I hold up these daughters of Zelophehad to your commendation and imitation on account of their faith.

But there was another point. Feeling certain concerning the land, we must next commend them for *their anxiety to possess a portion in it*. Why did they think so much about it? I heard someone say, the other day, speaking of certain young people, “I do not like to see young women religious—they ought to be full of fun and mirth, and not have their minds filled with such profound thoughts.”

Now, I will be bound to say that this kind of philosophy was accredited in the camp of Israel and that there were a great many young women there who said, “Oh, there is time enough to think about the good land when we get there! Let us be polishing up our mirrors. Let us be seeing to our dresses. Let us understand how to put our fingers upon the timbrel when the time comes for it. But as for prosing about a portion among those Hivites and Hittites, what is the good of it? We will not bother ourselves about that.”

But such was the strength of the faith of these five women that it led them to feel a deep anxiety for a share in the inheritance. They were not such simpletons as to live only for the present. They had outgrown their babyhood—they were not satisfied to live merely for the day. They knew that, in due time, the tribes would cross the Jordan and would be in the promised land, so they began, as it were, like good housewives, to think about where their portion would be, and to reflect that, were they left out when the muster-roll was read—and should no portion be appointed for Tirzah, no portion for Milcah, and no place for any of the five sisters, they would be like beggars and outcasts in the midst of the land.

The thought of all others having their plot of ground and their family having none, made them anxious about it. O dear friends, how anxious you and I ought to be to make our calling and election sure, and how solemnly should that question of the Countess of Huntingdon come home to our hearts,

*“But can I bear the piercing thought—
What if my name should be left out,
When Thou for them shalt call?”*

Suppose I should have no portion in the skies! O you foundations of chrysolite and all manner of precious stones, you gates of pearl, you walls of jasper, must I never own you? O troops of angels and armies of the blood-bought, must I never wave the palm or wear the crown in your midst? Must the word that salutes me be that awful sentence, “Depart, ye cursed, into everlasting fire”? Is there no place for me, no room for me, in the inheritance of the saints?

I do beseech you, never be satisfied till you can answer this question in the affirmative and say, "Yes, I have a place in Jesu's heart. I have been washed in Jesu's blood And therefore I shall be with Jesus where He is in His glory when the fitting time comes."

Oh, I would have you who are not sure about this, be as anxious as these women were! Let it press upon your hearts, let it even take the color from your cheek, sooner than that you should have an empty and frivolous gaiety and mirth, which will entice you down to the pit. Oh, do make sure work for eternity! Whatever else you trifle with, do seek to have an anchor that will hold you fast in the last great storm. Seek to be affianced unto Christ. Be sure that you are founded upon the Rock of ages, where alone we can safely build for eternity.

These women were taken up with prudent anxious thoughts about their own part in the land of promise—and they were right in desiring to have a portion there when they recollected that the land had been given by covenant to their fathers. They might well wish to have a part in a thing good enough to be a covenant blessing.

The land had been promised over and over again by divine authority—they might well wish to have a share in that which God's own lips had promised. It was a land to bring them into which God had smitten the firstborn of Egypt and saved His people by the sprinkling of blood—they might well desire a land which cost so great a price to bring them to it.

Besides, it was a goodly land. It was the most princely of all lands, peerless amongst all the territories of earth. Its products were most rich. The grapes of Eshcol—what could equal them? Its pomegranates, its olives, its rivers—the land that flowed with milk and honey—there was nothing like it in all the world besides. These women might well say, "Let us have a portion there!"

And my dear hearers, the heaven of which we have to tell you is a land so good that it was spoken of in the covenant before the world was. It has been promised to the people of God ten thousand times. Jesus Christ has shed His precious blood that He might open the gates of it and bring us in. And it is such a land that, if you had but seen it, if you could but know what it is, you would pine away in stopping here, for it's very dust is gold, its meanest joys are richer than the transports of earth, and the poorest in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he who is the mightiest prince in the kingdoms of this world. Oh, that your mouths were set a-longing after the feasts of paradise! Oh that you pined to be where Jesus is and then, surely, you would be anxious to know whether you had a portion there.

I hold these women up as an example, because they believed in the unseen inheritance and they were anxious to get their portion in it.

But I must commend them yet again for *the way in which they set about the business*. I do not find that they went complaining from tent to tent that they were afraid that they had no portion. Many doubters do that—they tell their doubts and fears to others, but they get no further. But these five women went straight to Moses. He was at their head, he was their mediator—and then it is said that "Moses brought their cause before the Lord."

You see, these women did not try to get what they wanted by force. They did not say, "We will take care to get our share of the land when we get there." They did not suppose that they had any merit which they might plead, and so get it, but they went straight to Moses, and Moses took their cause and laid it before the Lord.

Do you want a portion in heaven, sinner? Go straight to Jesus, and Jesus will take your cause, and lay it before the Lord. It is a very sorry one as it stands by itself, but He has such a sweet way of so mixing Himself up with you, and yourself with Him, that His cause and your cause will be one cause, and the Father will give Him good success—and give you good success too.

Oh, that someone here would breathe the prayer, if he has never prayed before "Savior, will You see that I have a portion in the skies? Precious Savior, take my poor heart and wash it in Your precious blood, change it by your Holy Spirit, and make me ready to dwell where perfect saints are! Oh, do You undertake my cause for me, You blessed Advocate, and plead it before Your Father's face!" That is the

way to have the business of salvation effectually done. Take it out of your own hands and put into the hands of the Prophet like unto Moses, and you will surely speed.

Now, observe *the success of these women*. The Lord accepted their plea, for He said unto Moses, "The daughters of Zelophehad speak right." Yes, and when you cry to Him, and when His dear Son takes your prayer to Him, God will say, "That sinner speaks right." Beat on your breast and cry, "God be merciful to me a sinner," and He will say, "That soul speaks right."

Young woman, imitate these five sisters now. May God the Holy Spirit bring you to imitate them by humbly offering your plea through the Mediator, Jesus Christ, and God will say, "Ah, she speaks right, I have heard her and I have accepted her."

And then God said that these sisters should have their portion just the same as the men had—that they should have their share of land just as if they had inherited it as sons—and so will God say to every seeking sinner. Whatever may be the disability under which you labor, whatever bar there may have seemed to be to your claim, you shall inherit amongst the children, you shall take your part and your lot amongst the chosen people of God. Christ has set your cause before His Father, and it shall be unto you, poor sinner, according to your desire—and you shall have a part amongst the Lord's people.

I wish I had power to press this matter more immediately home upon you. Many of us who are now present are saved. It is a great satisfaction to remember how large a proportion of my congregation has come to Christ, but oh, there are many, many here who are—well, what are they? They do not know that they have any inheritance. They cannot read their title clear to mansions in the skies And what is worse, they are unconcerned about it.

If they were troubled about it, we should have hope concerning them, but no, they go their way, and like Pliable, having got out of the Slough of Despond, they turn around and say to Christians, "You may have the brave country all to yourselves for all we care." They are so fond of present pleasure, so easily enticed by the wily whispers of the arch-enemy, so soon overcome by their own passions, that they find it too hard to be Christians—to love Christ is a thing too difficult for them.

Ah! may God meet with you and make you wiser. Poor souls, you will perish—some of you will perish while you are looking on at this world's bubbles and baubles! You will perish—you will go down to hell with this earth's joys in your mouths—and they will not sweeten those mouths when the pangs of hell get hold upon you!

Your life is short. Your candle flickers in its socket. You must soon go the way of all flesh. We never meet one week after another without some death occurring between. Out of this vast number, surely it is all but impossible that we should ever all meet here again. Perhaps before this day next week, some of us will have passed the curtain, will have learned the great secret and will have entered the invisible world. Whose portion will it be? If it is yours, dear hearer, will you mount to worlds of joy, or shall—

***"Devils plunge thee down to hell
In infinite despair?"***

God make that a matter of concern with us, first, and then may we come to Jesus and receive the sprinkling of precious blood. And thus may He make it a matter of confidence with us that we are saved through Him and shall be partakers with them that are sanctified!

II. Secondly, I am going to use the whole incident as a GROUND OF APPEAL TO CERTAIN SPECIAL CLASSES.

Does it not strike you that there is here *a special lesson for our unconverted sisters*? Here are five daughters, I suppose young women, certainly unmarried women, and these five were unanimous in seeking to have a portion where God had promised it to His people. Have I any young women here who have not acted like that? I am afraid I have! Blessed be God for the many who come in among us who become solemnly impressed and give their young days to Jesus.

But there are some, there may be some here, of another mind. The temptations of this wicked Metropolis, the pleasures of this perilous city, lead them away from the right path, and prevent them from giving a fair hearing to God's Word. Well, but you are here, my sister, and may I, as a brother, put this question to you?

Do you not desire a portion in the skies? Have you no wish for glory? Have you no longing for the everlasting crown? Can you sell Christ for a few hours of mirth? Will you give Him up for a giddy song or an idle companion? Those are not your friends who would lead you from the paths of righteousness. Count them not dear, but loathe them, if they would entice you from Christ.

But as you will certainly die, and will as certainly live forever in endless woe or in boundless bliss, do see to your souls. "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness," and all other needful things shall be added to you. You have come fresh from the country, young woman, and leaving your mother's care, it is very likely that you have begun to absent yourself from the means of grace, but I charge you not to do so. On the contrary, let this bind you to your mother's God, and may you feel that, whereas you may have hitherto neglected God's house, and profaned God's day, yet henceforth, like the daughters of Zelophehad, you will seek to have a portion in the promised land.

The subject bears another way. *Has it not a voice, and a loud voice too, to the children of godly parents?* I like these young women saying that their father did not die with Korah, but that he only died the ordinary death which fell upon others because of the sin of the wilderness. And also their saying, "Why should the name of our father be done away from among his family, because he hath no son?"

It is a good thing to see this respect to parents—this desire to keep up the honor of the family. I was thinking whether there may not be some here, some children of godly parents, who would feel it a sad thing if they should bring disgrace upon the family name? Is it so, that though your father has been for many years a Christian, he has not one to succeed him?

O young man, have you no ambition to stand in his place, no wish to let his name be perpetuated in the church of God? Well, if the sons have no such ambition or if there are none, let the daughters say to one another, "Our father never disgraced his profession, he did not die in the company of them that gathered themselves together against the Lord, but he served the Lord faithfully—and we will not let his name be blotted out from Israel. We will join ourselves to the people of God and the family shall be represented still."

But oh, how I desire that the brothers and sisters would come together, and what a delightful thing it would be to see the whole family! In that household there were only five girls, but they all had their heritage. O father, would you not be happy if it should be so with your children? Mother, would you not be ready to say, "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy Word, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation," if you could see all your children brought in?

And why not, my brethren, why not? We will give God no rest until it is so. We will plead with Him until they are all saved. And young people, why not? The Lord's mercy is not straitened. The God of Abraham, of Isaac, of Jacob, and your father's God, we trust, will be your God. Oh, that you would follow in the footsteps of your parents so far as they followed Christ!

These daughters of Zelophehad seem to me to turn preachers—and I stand here to speak for them, and all five of them say to you, "We gained our inheritance by seeking for it through a mediator. Young women, brothers and sisters, you shall gain it, too, by seeking it through a Savior."

And does not this text also speak to another class—to *orphans*? These good girls had lost their parents, or otherwise the question would not have arisen. Father and mother had passed away and therefore they had to go to Moses for themselves. When the parents could not come to Moses for them, they came for themselves.

Think of the skies a moment, some of you. Perhaps this morning you were in a very different place, but think of the skies a minute. No, I do not mean the meteoric stones. I do not mean the stars, nor yon bright moon—but I want you to think of your mother, who is yonder. Do you remember when she gave you the last kiss, and bade you farewell, and said, "Follow me, my children, follow me to the skies"?

Think of a father who is there. His voice, doubtless, helping to swell the everlasting hallelujah. Does he not beckon you from the battlements of heaven and cry, "Children of my loins, follow me as I followed Christ"? Some of us have an honored grandsire there, an honored grandmother there. Many of you have little infants there, young angels whom God lent you for a little time, and then took them to heaven to show you the way, to lure you to go upwards too.

You all have some dear friends there with whom you walked to God's house in company. They have gone, but I charge you, by the living God, to follow them. Break not your households in twain. Let no solemn rifts and rents come into the family, But as they have gone to their rest, God grant unto you by the same road to come and rest eternally too.

Jesus Christ is ready to receive sinners. He is ready to receive you, and if you trust Him, the joy and bliss which now your friends partake of shall be yours also. Daughters of godly parents, children of those who have gone before to eternal glory, I entreat you look to Jesus. Go and present your suit to Him now. It shall surely prosper. If the question was once doubtful, it has now become "a statute of judgment." The Lord has commanded it. May God bless these counsels and exhortations to you, for Christ's sake! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON

GENESIS 1

Genesis 1:1. *In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.*

When that "beginning" was, we cannot tell. It may have been long ages before God fitted up this world for the abode of man, but it was not self-existent—it was created by God, it sprang from the will and the word of the all-wise Creator.

2. *And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep.*

When God began to arrange this world in order, it was shrouded in darkness, and it had been reduced to what we call, for lack of a better name, "chaos." This is just the condition of every soul of man when God begins to deal with him in His grace—it is formless and empty of all good things. "There is none righteous, no, not one: there is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way."

2. *And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.*

This was the first act of God in preparing this planet to be the abode of man, and the first act of grace in the soul is for the Spirit of God to move within it. How that Spirit of God comes there, we know not. We cannot tell how He acts, even as we cannot tell how the wind blows where it listeth, but until the Spirit of God moves upon the soul nothing is done towards its new creation in Christ Jesus.

3-4. *And God said, Let there be light: and there was light. And God saw the light, that it was good: and God divided the light from the darkness.*

"Light be." "Light was." God had but to speak the word and the great wonder was accomplished. How there was light before there was any sun—for the sun was not created until the fourth day of the week—it is not for us to say. But God is not dependent upon His own creation. He can make light without a sun, He can spread the Gospel without the aid of ministers, He can convert souls without any human or angelic method, for He does as He wills in the heavens above and on the earth beneath.

5. *And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And the evening and the morning were the first day.*

It is a good thing to have the right names for things. An error is often half killed when you know the real name of it—its power lies in its being indescribable. But as soon as you can call it "darkness," you know how to act towards it. It is also good thing to know the names of truths and the names of other things that are right. God is very particular in the Scripture about giving people their right names.

The Holy Spirit says, “Judas, not Iscariot,” so that there should be no mistake about the person intended. Let us also always call persons and things by their right names, “God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night.”

“And the evening and the morning were the first day.” Darkness first and light afterwards. It is so with us spiritually—first darkness, then light. I suppose that, until we get to heaven, there will be both darkness and light in us. And as to God's providential dealings, we must expect darkness as well as light. They will make up our first day and our last day, till we get where there are no days but the Ancient of Days.

6-8. *And God said, Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters. And God made the firmament, and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament: and it was so. And God called the firmament Heaven. And the evening and the morning were the second day.*

“The firmament”—an expanse of air in which floated the waters which afterwards condensed and fell upon the earth in refreshing showers. These waters above were divided from the waters below. Perhaps they were all one steamy conglomeration before, but now they are separated.

Note those four words, “and it was so.” Whatever God ordains always comes. You will find that it is true of all His promises, that, whatever He has said, shall be fulfilled to you, and you shall one day say of it all, “And it was so.” It is equally certain concerning all His threatenings that what He has spoken shall certainly be fulfilled, and the ungodly will have to say, “And it was so.”

These words are often repeated in this chapter. They convey to us the great lesson that the Word of God is sure to be followed by the deed of God. He speaks and it is done.

9-13. *And God said, Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together unto one place, and let the dry land appear: and it was so. And God called the dry land Earth; and the gathering together of the waters called he Seas: and God saw that it was good. And God said, Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed is in itself, upon the earth: and it was so. And the earth brought forth grass, and herb yielding seed after his kind, and the tree yielding fruit, whose seed was in itself, after his kind: and God saw that it was good. And the evening and the morning were the third day.*

Having attended to the air, God further exercised His power by setting the earth in order. Observe the remarkable fact that, no sooner had God made the dry land appear, than it seemed as if He could not bear the sight of it in its nakedness. What a strange place this world must have looked, with its plains and hills and rooks and vales without one single blade of grass, or a tree, or a shrub.

So at once, before that day was over, God threw the mantle of verdure over the earth, and clad its mountains and valleys with forests and plants and flowers, as if to show us that the fruitless is uncomely in God's sight, that the man who bears no fruit unto God is unendurable to Him. There would be no beauty whatever in a Christian without any good works and with no graces.

As soon as ever the earth appeared, then came the herb, and the tree, and the grass. So, dear brethren, in like manner, let us bring forth fruit unto God and bring it forth abundantly, for herein is our heavenly Father glorified—that we bear much fruit.

14-19. *And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years: and let them be for lights in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth: and it was so. And God made two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night: he made the stars also. And God set them in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth, and to rule over the day and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness: and God saw that it was good. And the evening and the morning were the fourth day.*

Whether the sun and moon are here said to be absolutely created, or whether they were only created so far as our planet was concerned by the dense vapors being cleared away so that the sun and moon and stars could be seen, is a matter of no consequence at all to us. Let us rather learn a lesson from them.

These lights are to rule, but they are to rule by giving light. And brethren, this is the true rule in the church of God. He who gives most light is the truest ruler—and the man who aspires to leadership in the church of God, if he knows what he is doing, aspires to be the servant of all by laying himself out for the good of all, even as our Savior said to His disciples, “Whosoever of you will be the chiefest, shall be servant of all.”

The sun and moon are the servants of all mankind, and therefore do they rule by day and by night. Stoop, my brothers, if you wish to lead others. The way up is downward. To be great, you must be little. He is the greatest who is nothing at all unto himself, but all for others.

20-23. *And God said, Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature that hath life, and fowl that may fly above the earth in the open firmament of heaven. And God created great whales, and every living creature that moveth, which the waters brought forth abundantly, after their kind, and every winged fowl after his kind: and God saw that it was good. And God blessed them, saying, Be fruitful, and multiply, and fill the waters in the seas, and let fowl multiply in the earth. And the evening and the morning were the fifth day.*

There was no life in the sea or on the land until all was ready for it. God would not make a creature to be unhappy. There must be suitable food to feed upon, and the sun and moon to cheer and comfort, ere a single bird shall chirp in the thicket or a solitary trout shall leap in the stream.

So, after God has given men light, and blessed them in various ways, their spiritual life begins to develop to the glory of God. We have the thoughts that soar like fowl in the open firmament of heaven, and other thoughts that dive into the mysteries of God, as the fish dive in the sea. And these are after-developments, after-growths of that same power which at the first said, “Let there be light.”

24-25. *And God said, Let the earth bring forth the living creature after his kind, cattle, and creeping thing, and beast of the earth after his kind: and it was so. And God made the beast of the earth after his kind, and cattle after their kind, and every thing that creepeth upon the earth after his kind: and God saw that it was good.*

There is as much wisdom and care displayed in the creation of the tiniest creeping insect as in the creation of leviathan himself. Those who use the microscope are as much amazed at the greatness and the goodness of God as those are who use the telescope. He is as great in the little as He is in the great.

After each day's work, God looks upon it—and it is well for us every night to review our day's work. Some men's work will not bear looking at, and tomorrow becomes all the worse to them because today was not considered and its sin repented of by them. But if the errors of today are marked by us, a repetition of them may be avoided on the morrow.

It is only God who can look upon any one day's work and say of it, as a whole, and in every part, that it is “good.” As for us, our best things need sprinkling with the blood of Christ, which we need not only on the lintels and side posts of our house, but even on the altar and the mercy seat at which we worship God.

26-28. *And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.*

God evidently meant the two persons, male and female, to complete the man, and the entireness of the manhood lies in them both. The earth is completed now that man has come upon it, and man is completed when the image of God is upon him, when Christ is formed in him the hope of glory, but not till then. When we have received the power of God, and have dominion over ourselves, and over all earthly things, in the power of God's eternal Spirit, then are we where and what God intends us to be.

29-30. *And God said, Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat. And*

to every beast of the earth, and to every fowl of the air, and to every thing that creepeth upon the earth, wherein there is life, I have given every green herb for meat: and it was so.

Now you see God's commissariat. He has not made all these creatures in order to starve them, but He has supplied them with great variety and abundance of food, that their wants may be satisfied. Does God care for the cattle and will He not feed His own children? Does He provide for ravens and sparrows, and will He suffer you to lack anything, O ye of little faith? Observe that God did not create man until He had provided for him—neither will He ever put one work of His providence or of His grace out of its proper place, but that which goes before shall be preparatory to that which follows after.

31. *And God saw every thing that he had made, and behold, it was very good.*

Taken in its completeness, and all put together, God saw that it was very good. We must never judge anything before it is complete.

Taken from The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit C. H. Spurgeon Collection. Only necessary changes have been made, such as correcting spelling errors, some punctuation usage, capitalization of deity pronouns, and minimal updating of a few archaic words. The content is unabridged. Additional Bible-based resources are available at www.spurgeongems.org.